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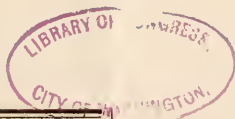
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Rev A. B. May -

Jan. 1 1865



THE REPUBLIC AT PEACE!

A DISCOURSE DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF
THE NATIONAL FAST, JUNE 1ST, 1865, IN THE
CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER, CINCINNATI, OHIO,
BY REV. A. D. MAYO.

"First pure, then peaceable."—JAMES iii. 17.

WHILE the imposing funeral ceremonies of ABRAHAM LINCOLN were yet proceeding, ANDREW JOHNSON, his successor in the office of President of the United States, issued his Proclamation, on the 25th April, calling upon the loyal people of this Republic to observe the 1st June in solemn service to Almighty God, in memory of the good man who has been removed, so that all shall be occupied at the same time in contemplation of his virtues, and sorrow for his sudden and violent end. We are here to-day in response to that call.

Not two months have elapsed since the death of Abraham Lincoln; but the news has gone round the world, and already has every civilized nation uttered its voice of sorrow and appreciation. Never in history has there been a verdict to the excellence of one man so prompt and so unanimous. From St. Petersburg to San Francisco, the head of every great nation has spoken, and all have repeated the same thing—that in the sudden fall of Abraham Lincoln, the cause of good government, public and private virtue, and human advancement, has met a bereavement that can only be explained by a gracious Providence. No man of any reputation in any civilized land has dared, even if he has desired, to disparage the character and services of the good President so suddenly removed from his lofty position. In the loyal States of the Republic, his bitterest political and personal enemies have almost caught the words of eulogy out of the mouths of his best friends. The rebel leaders who, for the past four years, have covered his name with every species of calumny, and some of whom have certainly contemplated, if not plotted his violent death, make haste to purge themselves of this suspicion of the crime of his taking off. The sovereigns of all the great empires on the globe know too well how different and rare is such virtue as his in such a place, and bear affectionate tribute to a character they cannot hope to excel. And from the innermost heart of every people on the globe is coming up that spontaneous assurance which will become the deliberate verdict of history, that our departed father will take his place among the few who were at once the rulers and the benefactors of mankind.

And already do all good and sincere men begin to feel the inspiring and reconciling influence of his memory. I am sure I only set forth the common experience when I say that I am able to bear my own little temptations and toils and trials better when I think how patiently and meekly and persistently he wrought, endured, and resisted during the

four dreadful years of his probation as the head of this people. If I have any grievances from the neglect and suspicion of my friend or the machinations of my enemy, I can more easily control my wrath and contain myself when I reflect through what a storm of ridicule and detraction and treachery and hatred he calmly walked his blood-stained path, through much tribulation, to his exceeding great triumph. I believe all men who have to do with public affairs in this country are already learning from his career how much stronger is justice and moderation and patient duty than any violence of zeal or shrewdness of statecraft.

But perhaps the best lesson he has taught us in national life—a lesson also taught by the career of his great compeer, and almost his associate in martyrdom, the Secretary of State—is, that true statesmanship consists in conducting affairs on the most hopeful principle in the gloomiest times. If there was anything which has been especially misunderstood in the policy of these two men it is this—that they have, from the first, had a faith in the existence of the Union that nothing could shake; have believed that this terrible rebellion was only an episode in the triumphant progress of the Republic to a true democracy; that the day would come when all men, at home and abroad, who in any way countenanced it, would wish to have the fact buried in oblivion; and that our public policy, foreign and domestic, should be conducted on the principle that when the tumult was over, well-meaning men should find no bar to reconciliation and repentance in the attitude of the Government of the United States. Neither of these two men has left a line on record that need make any man on earth his personal or political foe in this hour of reünion. Neither has advised one revengeful or retaliatory measure that need keep any enemy at home or abroad from becoming our fast friend. While doing the severe duty of the hour; while signing together the great Proclamation of Emancipation that dissolved society through fifteen States they have worked all through like Providence, unrelenting in ideas,

but full of clemency for fallible and erring men. The furious patriotism that has wasted itself in their detraction now confesses itself overmastered by a greatness so far-reaching and admirable, and hereafter men will not so easily despair of the Republic.

The character and memory of this good man has already begun to unite his late distracted country. The cry for vengeance that rose from his violent death grows fainter every day as that gracious life comes more clearly into prominence. The foes of the Union seemed paralyzed by what they had done, and seventy-five thousand hostile men have grounded arms in silence since that day, until no recognized army of the rebellion now exists. From every part of the South comes up a lamentation over the fall of the Father who knew when to chastise and how to forgive. And the fiercest zealots of an exterminating barbarism seem to recoil on approaching the calm atmosphere of that untroubled soul. I know not what outbreaks of passion we may yet witness. I cannot tell what barbaric counsels may prevail. But I am convinced that God has in the life and memory of this noble man built up for us a temple of concord; and that the Union of the future will come only as fast as we act towards each other in his spirit, and carry out his lofty policy. I do not believe a word of what we have been told, that God removed Abraham Lincoln from us because he was too amiable and gracious for the stern duties of this hour of reconstruction. I do not pretend to read the will of Providence; but if anything is clear to me in this confused time, it is that God has, in the life and character of Abraham Lincoln, given us a model of what must be the style of citizenship and public policy which can alone reconcile the hatreds of two centuries, and mould two opposing forces of society into one enduring Republic.

So, already, is it appearing that the death of this man was not the work of a malignant fate, but the dispensation of a Providence as benign as it is awful, which smites only to heal, and, through the most fearful periods of human wrath, works steadily towards the broadest human welfare.

But to-day, along with our meditation upon the character of the departed President, comes the consciousness of the *Republic at Peace*. In the swift days that have flown since his departure, the last army of the boasted "Confederacy" has laid down its arms; the last ship of its piratical navy has ceased to threaten commerce; its President, and the greater portion of its leading men in civil or military life are in the power of the Union, dependent on the clemency of Andrew Johnson for their lives; its currency has passed into the waste-bags of the Southern housekeepers, and its archives fill the lumber-rooms of the state buildings at Washington; its very name has ceased to designate any existing thing.

As I passed up the Ohio river two days ago, I saw a dejected, worn-out young man, dressed almost like a beggar, sitting about in the corners of the boat, evidently curious to know if he would be observed. While he sat there alone, an old negro woman, respectably dressed, with a look that denoted years of faithful nursing in some family, made her way up to and addressed him with a good-natured voice. That young man was a Kentucky slave-owner four years ago. His cruelty to his old nurse had driven her from her home of sixty years. She had come to the North to find her rights. He had enlisted in the rebel army to find his. He was now going home to face his humiliation. The contrast between these two persons set forth in striking colors the present status of that guiltiest aristocracy of modern days. The Republic has awakened from its fevered dream of woe, and is now at peace.

Perhaps it is better to keep fast than thanksgiving upon this, too. I believe in keeping no fast to propitiate an angry deity, or beg off from the just penalty for the nation's sins. That is pagan, as even the old Hebrew prophet told the world twenty-five hundred years ago. But we may well make this a day of solemn reflection on our present condition, and our duty in the future. We cannot say this triumph is our own work. It is God's mighty providence wrought out by means of our coöperation; and though we may rejoice that we are the chosen agents of the glorious achievement,

we may not arrogate the merit. I doubt if, as a people, we have deserved as much as we now have accomplished. When we consider how many years we not only permitted our national scandal to go on, but petted it, became proud, and strong, and encouraged its insolence, and, had it been willing, would have bought it off at the last hour, at the price of our brother's manhood; when we think how slowly we, the people of the loyal States, came up to the duties of the hour, making it an impossibility that our President should move faster than he did move towards the victory of the right; when we contemplate the coldness and hostility to a true republic that still abound; we can only say, that God in his mercy has given us another opportunity to raise up a nation on the corner-stone of the Golden Rule. He has not given it so much for our desert as to arouse us to do all we can for mankind. Let us rejoice with a holy joy, mingled with fear, and draw near God in prayers that shall blossom into lives of purity and peace.

And the great question to-day is, how can this suspension of war become a real peace? For we have yet no actual peace; only its favorable conditions. The war that has desolated this fair land these four sad years did not reside in cannon, and rifles, and armored ships, and sabres, but in the souls of the men who used them against each other. These weapons of destruction have ceased to do their dreadful work; but the war still makes a hell in the souls of millions of our countrymen. You have only to look in the faces of half the men and women across our river to behold a hatred to the Union and the freedom it now represents, that contains the material for a thousand wars. This aristocracy, the haughtiest and the most unreasonable in the world, that has so moved heaven, and earth, and hell to work our destruction, is not to subside at once into gentle, loving citizenship of a republic the very opposite of that it tried to establish. These millions of poor and middling class white people, so cruelly deceived and so completely despoiled in the war; these other millions of newly-liberated bondmen, who float now like a black cloud over the South with no

fixed status in society, are not to strike hands with one another all at once. This great fierce North, greedy for money, elated with the sense of power, itself divided by the machinations of its own barbarism, is still to have its trials. How is peace to come to these thirty millions that shall unite us in one people; that shall make that people a true Democracy founded on justice and reverence for man; that shall hold the Union intact when there are fifty States and a hundred millions of people, of whom ten millions will be of that race which we have fought about so terribly these past years?

It may be an old-fashioned way to open the Bible when we are pressed with a great difficulty; but amid the jargon of voices which are now uttering plans of reconstruction, I am only assured by the old words of the Apostle, "First pure, then peaceable." I have no plan of reconstruction to ventilate before you to-day. I have no great respect for most of the plans that come with the endorsement of great names. I apprehend that as we learned to defeat the armies of the national foe not by anybody's theory so much as by an education through a hundred bitter defeats, so the Union and Liberty will be established, not by any one man's method, or all at once. I expect to see as many failures, defeats, disappointments in the quarter of a century before us as in that behind us. Read the history of this Republic for the last twenty-five years. It seems as if the slave aristocracy had gained almost every battle in council and on the field; yet the people all the time grew wiser and stronger, so that the decisive day at the ballot-box, in Congress, on the field, and on the sea has always gone against it. So I expect to see a good many fine plans destroyed; whole States disorganized; complications in politics and great confusion in society over large districts in our land. I shall not be surprised to behold great men of to-day failing to meet the exigencies of to-morrow. I may even see a majority of the people beclouded by some storm of passion or bewildered by some novel aspect of our strange affairs. The old heads of Europe, who know by a thousand years' experience what it means to reconcile disaffected states, tell us that our troubles are now just beginning. We may ap-

propriate the warning, though uttered with no good will to us.

But I take my stand on this old maxim of Christianity, and say: "First pure, then peaceable." Peace and Union in all worlds follow Purity and Love. As fast as the people of these United States approach a genuine purity in individual, social, industrial public life, will peace sink into the very soul of the nation, and union become the essential law of the millions that swarm its mighty distances. This national purity must assume two phases: negative, administering retribution for past sins; positive, doing the work of the future.

We have now a portentous question before us—a question of the punishment of the traitors against the nation's life. Who are they? How shall we discriminate the classes of them? Who shall we forgive and who punish? What shall that punishment be?

The President of the United States has issued his proclamation of amnesty. It admits all rebels to pardon who take a strong oath to the Union and Freedom. But through its exceptions *it leaves the entire body of the old slave aristocracy in the hands of the Executive and People of the United States.* Any man or woman among the hundreds of thousands included in these exceptions may be arrested, tried for treason, sentenced to death under the Constitution of the United States; and the President alone has power to remit the penalty.

This is probably a wise arrangement. It does not place this aristocracy in the hands of one man, but of the whole people. Andrew Johnson can only punish or pardon those whom the people declare should be thus treated. Public opinion is now supreme in the Republic, and no President will venture to destroy or save against its deliberate mandate.

So we, the people, will soon be called to make up our mind who shall be judicially punished, and what that punishment shall be. The loyal white people in power in all the Southern States will be called to decide what State privileges shall be accorded to those who of late were traitors. We shall be called to decide how we will treat men and women who have

sympathized with this great crime among ourselves. And oh, what a purification of ourselves will this necessitate! Who of us has clean hands and a pure heart for such an awful assize? If we judge in vengeance, in pagan retaliation, in personal hatred, new-fledged pride, or contempt, in any spirit but a pure spirit of justice and lofty patriotism, our judgment will embitter ourselves, exasperate our foes, disgust the world, and result in new wars before we are in our graves. It is now very easy for our people to fight. It was very hard four years ago. We can have a new war in a year if we choose. We shall have dreadful anarchy unless we judge in purity.

The only punishment we have any right to administer to any rebel man or woman or class or State, is that which shall build up our whole Republic on foundations of Liberty, of Union, of Peace. If the life of any man will be permanently hostile to that end, we have a right to take it. If the residence of any number of people among us will prevent that, we have a right to send them into exile. If the confiscation of the property of any class of men is essential to the liberty of all men in the regenerated Union, we should do that. If any State reorganized would turn out another South Carolina, we have a right to hold it under the national military rule till it can safely be admitted. If the presence of any set of persons in Northern or Southern society is poisoning the public mind and morals in this direction, we ought to ostracise all such at once. We have no right to sacrifice or to spare for any motive but for the highest good of the nation. How much chastisement and how much mercy we need, can only be determined by the event. Nobody can reasonably insist on any special policy, for the policy must be determined by the state of affairs. But every good man should insist that this judgment shall be *pure*; with sovereign view to the lasting good of the Republic; to prevent future revolts in the interest of despotism; to consolidate the Union for the freedom of men. Let us pray to-day that God will give us grace to take our part in that great judgment aright.

This old slave aristocracy must pass away with its peculiar morals, manners, political, social, industrial, religious ideas, before the Republic can be at peace. But it cannot be crushed out of existence by mere weight of punishment. Punishment is only a negative force. It breaks down, but does not build up. It destroys, but does not convert. Alone, it can only perpetuate strife. The whole history of the past teaches us that the smallest people, whether in the right or in the wrong, cannot be destroyed by mere penalty. England has ground Ireland two hundred years, but is Ireland at peace with her foe? We may hang every rebel of distinction in the South; make of his family beggars; follow with all kinds of contumely his posterity all over the world—we shall not abolish the rebel aristocracy thereby.

Nothing bad is abolished till something better is ready to take its place. Slave society in the South was a bad thing, but it was the only thing there, and after its fashion, subdued the country and made fit the abode of civilized man. God uses a good many ugly tools to dig up the stumps, and burn the forests, and drain the swamps of a howling wilderness. He has used this old Egyptian plough, with a feudal slave, to turn over the sod of these fifteen Slave States. Its sin consisted in not dying decently when its work was done. It strove to live and make all the new world like it. In the Agricultural Hall in Albany, N. Y., is a long line of ploughs, from that used in the days of the Pharaohs to the latest improvement to-day. Each did a work in its day, and went to its own place, with more or less of wailing among its friends. If that file of old ploughs could be animated with life, and under some feudal commander stalk out and claim possession of the fields of America, they would be found just where this old slave society is to-day. But the way to supplant them is not to make laws against their use, but to invent new and better ploughs. As fast as free society can get organized on Southern soil, slave society will retreat, as the rattlesnakes disappear before the cultivation of the earth. The great work for the people of the United States is

now to organize a truly free society all over the land. Organize it in the spirit of *purity*; and as fast as that order of society grows, the old, crude arrangements of the past will go to their own place, and become the national antiquities.

Every true American citizen should now begin the work of purification. When the knights of the middle ages were about to engage in a hazardous enterprise they united in the Christian communion. The meaning of such a day as this is that every citizen should solemnly consider his part in this great work of building up the waste places of the country, and consecrate himself thereto by an honest, pure, industrious life. All the war of the last stormy years came forth from the selfish and turbulent souls of wicked men, and was fostered by the cowardly selfishness of those who dared not stand up for the right. All peace in the future must come out of souls purified by the radical reverence for man which makes Patriotism the same as Religion. This private purity will fill the channels of public activity and swell the tide of Union. Never was it so dangerous to live under the power of low, base, sinful motives as to-day, in our land.

We shall be able to organize free labor in the South in proportion as our whole system of American industry is purified from the taint of dishonesty and selfish oppression of the weak by the strong. In such a system the weakest race always goes to the bottom. I would as soon trust the negroes to the tender mercies of their former masters, as to the crowd of harpies and sharpers who are sweeping into Southern cities to clutch a fortune. A selfish, dishonest man will make a slave of everybody who will submit to it. If our only question is: "How can these poor people be turned to the most profit at once?" we may keep them virtually enslaved under any system. But if we ask: "How can we educate the complete industrial faculties of this eighth part of the American people, and make of them a permanent power in the nation's development," we may lay the foundations of untold wealth of liberty in the future. Let every young man who begins life this year reflect that he is bound to transact business on a nobler principle than has pre-

vailed, that labor may be ennobled and manhood advanced through the whole Republic.

We must purify our whole idea of culture. An educated man who now perverts his gifts and acquirements to the defence of inhumanity; who resists the new civilization, or even ignores it in cultivated contempt, should be told that his is only a sham culture. Real cultivation includes, grows out of, love to man. Man is the central object of interest in God's world; and he who trifles with science or letters or art in a spirit of contempt or indifference to the sacred nature of rights of man, is the worst of triflers. Southern culture has left out man; and the South has not yet written a book that posterity will read. We shall have peace and union when our people are all educated to look upon a regard for humanity as the test of all mental enlargement.

Especially do we need to purify our social life. Do you think to have peace while our young men are plunging through the hells of drunkenness and sensuality, and our young women making shipwreck of womanhood on the rocks of a godless social ambition? One of the most powerful forces of the slave rebellion was the insanity of social ambition among the young women of the South. And next to that was the fearful demoralization of personal character among Southern young men. Every godless youth in society swells the tide of this barbarism. The time has come when every true American woman should make persistent immorality a disqualification for her society. Every man in public life, civil or military; every man in literary, artistic, professional life, who wantonly persists in outraging the common moralities, should be shut outside the door of every virtuous household. Society needs the association of the best to regenerate and refine those below. And when it smiles upon unblushing wickedness there can be no true peace. The contempt for humanity has been the passport to social distinction in our national capital and through half our country. All that must be changed. Vulgarity is synonymous with contempt of man; and no varnish of culture or gift of nature can make a gentleman or lady of one who despises the image of God.

The downfall of the slave power will remove the worst temptation from our political life. That has been the Satan which has seduced and destroyed more of our great public men than all other causes. But there are still the elements of terrible corruption in our free institutions; and on the purification of our politics will depend our peace. It is not so important whether a part or the whole of the people vote, as that the voters are intelligent and honest. It is not essential that any set of men should hold office, but that office should be sacredly held for the common good. I am far more interested in elevating the character of the voters of to-day than in agitating for the franchise of any new class. No outward expedient can save our politics from despotism. We have introduced half a dozen new classes to the franchise during the last fifty years, and every one of them has voted for years against the people. The negroes will vote just as all ignorant people vote. I do not say that is a reason why we should keep them away from the ballot-box; but it is a reason why every American citizen should devote his best energies to purifying his soul and lifting up his neighbors so that all shall vote on the side of man and against his enemies. Every advance in purity, in the motives of the voter, and the life of the ruler, hastens the hour of real peace.

And oh, my friends, how do we need a purifying fire through our American religion! Who can wonder at the dreadful history of the past when he reflects on the wretched quality of much of our Christianity? No country is better than its popular faith. The organized religion of America is fast beginning to see that love to God and love to man are the sum of all piety and morality. We have been trying to go on with a spurious, sentimental half-love and half-fear of God; and instead of a love for man a selfish greediness for our own salvation and the success of our sectarian church. It won't do. No "salvation" comes by that route, but rather such "damnation" as we have seen in these mournful years. Oh! let the ministers of Christ lift up their voices as He did in the days of old, proclaiming that man

is the centre of all religious interest, and all worship of God must show itself real by its results on God's dear child. Let our religion search for the neighbor among all the children of the common Father. Let all our creeds and ecclesiasticisms centre in the sanctification of humanity, the regeneration of society, the changing this very land of ours to the kingdom of Christ, our Lord. We shall have as much peace and union as we have true religion, and we cannot have more.

Well do I know how slowly such peace can come in such a land as ours. But I do not despair of its coming. We have affrighted the whole civilized earth by such a war as modern days have not seen. We owe it to the world now to do better things for civilization than were ever done before. If we have only made this destruction to leave a permanent mark, history will curse our name. If we have destroyed only to fulfil a higher order of human affairs, our work will be applauded by man and approved by God. May this day's observance leave us better citizens of the Republic. May Purity and Peace, sweet handmaids of Union, prevail through all our land.

CINCINNATI, May 31, 1865.

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